THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Hardship and Harrassment to the widows for getting Payments of N.S.Cs.

1652 SHRI MOHD. KHALEELUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the great hardship and harrassment caused to the widows, particularly, the Army widows, in the matter of getting payment of National Savings Certificates on their maturity, due to the operation of century-old outmoded and archaic rules and formalities of all sorts of verification relating thereto;

(b) whether the Lajpat Nagar Head Post Office in Delhi is harrassing these widows and despite their fulfilling of all the prescribed formalities delays payment by crossed cheque even when there is hardly any risk involved.

(c) whether despite the matter having been brought to the notice of the Chief Post Master General, New Delhi, and the Senior Supdt. of Post Offices, Golf Links, New Delhi no action has been taken to expedite the settlement of claims; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons therefor and how Government propose to sort out matters once for all?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) No, Sir. The rules regarding payment of NSCs are framed by Government with a view to ensuring maximum convenience to investors at the time of payment. These rules are also subjected to constant review so as to provide better service to the investors.

(b to (d) One complaint in this regard has been received. Expeditious action is being taken to settle the case after due compliance of the prescribed procedure.

Indian Ports Association

1653. SHRI PRAVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether an organisation in the name of Indian Ports Association is working for co-ordination and consultancy work for all the major ports and as well for the Ministry of Surface Transport; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the work done so far by Indian Ports Association since its inception and what is the number of Officers and employees working therein?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Indian Ports Association have undertaken important studies/activities in connection with Re-structuring of port tariff and simplification of port procedures, Re-structuring and revision of the wages for port employees, drawing up of phased programme for training of port officers, evolution of frame work for up-grading and optimising the activities of Indian Institute of Port Management, Calcutta and National Institute of Port Management, Madras, publication of quarterly journal 'Indian Ports', setting up of computerised data bank, in-house port consultancy, studies for better utilisation of manpower and other resources in ports, Master Plan study in respect of ports like New Mangalore, Tuticorin, Madras, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kandla, workshops seminars at national and international levels, assistacee in the preparation of a perspective plan for the port sector, etc. The total number of officers and, employees working in Indian Ports Association is 57.